



MAPBD WATCHDOG

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION FOR PURE BRED DOGS

Founded 1964

"Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership"



mapbd.org

May 1, 2015

SB 219 of 2015 SB 220 of 2015

SB 219 and SB 220 places certain restrictions on ownership of animals by persons convicted by certain crimes against animals and require registered animal shelters and animal protection shelters to conduct criminal background checks on anyone wishing to adopt a pet. These checks would utilize ICHAT (Internet Criminal History Access Tool), which is maintained by the State Police.

MAPBD POSITION: No civilized person advocates animal abuse. However, there are problematic issues in the language of these bills, some of which would result in unintended consequences.

MAPBD approves of these bills, with amendments, having problematic language clarified.

- **SB 219 would prevent all violators, regardless of the severity of the offense, or the individual circumstances of a case, from adopting a pet for a period of 5 years. Judges already have full authority in sentencing to impose ownership restrictions, if needed, on a case by case basis.** (Examples: elderly persons who might need assistance or animal hoarders who need psychological help are not willfully committing animal abuse).
- **SB 219** page 6, line 4 needs the words "if convicted" inserted before "shall". Expenses for housing, care, etc. to be assessed against the owner of the animal(s) only upon conviction. Additionally, page 8 line 3, "the court shall order the return of the money"; property also needs to be returned as well as money.
- **SB 220** Page 2, lines 19-21, As agreed to with the bills in the last session, the animal control shelter or animal protection shelter must be registered with MDARD in order to use the ICHAT registry on a free to use basis. Being a registered shelter, which is already required by law, contributes to the welfare of the animals in that MDARD would have oversight of those animal welfare societies and the animals under their care. Otherwise the state would be providing a free service for an entity that is not in compliance with current law.
- **SB 220** There needs to be a vehicle to expunge names from the ICHAT registry in cases where the individual is not convicted or the case being dismissed. By having a name on the registry shelters could refuse to allow pet adoption not only to those persons who were convicted, but anyone arrested or charged with an animal abuse offense, regardless of the final disposition of the case, including dismissal. This is a civil rights violation. We can think of no other legal circumstance in which citizens face additional sanctions when their cases are dismissed.

MAPBD is a Michigan non-profit organization founded in 1964. Its members and member clubs advocate for responsible dog ownership and work to protect the rights of Michigan citizens to own, breed, and enjoy their dogs.

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